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THE
LOST FAIRY BIRD.

MRS. B. A. PIERSON.



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—T H E—

LOST FAIRY BIRD

A POEM,

—BY—

MRS. B. A. PIERSON.

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PS
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To MRS. J. F. MILLER,

OF LOUISVILLE, KY.

These verses are most affectionately inscribed by her friend,

THE AUTHOR.

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THE LOST FAIRY BIRD.

*Written on the S. S. Nassau, and suggested by the fall of a
Bird called Man-of-War on deck.*

SIX BEAUTIFUL birds flew over the
main,
Six beautiful birds with a sweet refrain !
With wings as white as the snows that sleep
On the mountain crest, whose lofty steep
Rising and gleaming in distance afar,
Is crowned with the radiant morning star !
Six beautiful birds, and one was a Queen,
Singing and sporting amid the bright sheen !
Upon her fair wings were garlands of flowers,
Culled from the land of the amaranth bowers !
Lily and snow-drop and pearl-colored blossom
Hung in their beauty upon her white bosom !
A fairy princess and one day to reign
Over a wide and a flow'ry domain !

For snowy-winged birds are not what they seem,
But spirits of woodland, of valley or stream ;
And we, with our weak and sin-stricken eyes
Pierce not their harmless and loving disguise.
If a mortal but touch them, dishonored they die,
Or wander o'er earth 'neath the dark, wintry sky !
And never to look on the dear, fairy faces,
Or never to see the sweet, flowery places !
Onward they floated, those beautiful birds,
Over the deep, with their low, loving words !

“ Oh, kind, gentle friends,” the princess bird said,
As she fluttered her wings and poised her fair head,
“ Look to the eastward and tell me, I pray,
What is that creature that floats far away ?
See, how quickly it moves ! and its huge,
graceless form
Is instinct with life ; with majesty warm !
Oh, my kind spirit friends, let us draw very near,

Of this creature, if mortal or bird, I've no
fear !

Strange, that this object we never have seen,
Come *Illa, Monina*, follow your queen."

" Oh princess," said *Illa*, " I pray you beware !
Did not the fairy queen make you our care ?
And if evil befall her darling, I know
It will kill her proud spirit with weeping and
woe !

For dear, lovely princess, no mortal should
brook,
On your beautiful form—on your sweet face
to look !

So do not go near—it is only a snare ;
Dear, beautiful princess, we pray you, beware."

" The heart of a queen should never know fear,
Monina, your princess commands you draw
near !

If the spirit of *Illa* is cowardly, weak—
We will show her that higher enjoyments we
seek,
The pleasure of learning from Nature's great
book !

Come, spirit friends, come ; on this strange object look !”

But Monina fell on her knees, as she said,
While she bowed to the princess her own stately head :

“ Our love for you, dear one, fills us with fears,
For what to our vision so stately appears
May, only a monster of mortal device,
Be waiting to seize you—oh, therefore, be wise !

If need be, we’d die for you, darling, be sure,
But let not this object so foully allure !
For lost is the princess who yields to the snare,
And is touched by a mortal—I pray you, beware !”

“ I scorn your monitions—alone will I fly !
Knights of the Lily; sooner I’d die
Than abjectly live in cowardly fear,
Away—I will not that one should be near.”

She moved her white wings—she rose to the sky,

With grace in her movements and pride in
her eye !

And paused but a moment, afar in the air,
To fling back in scorn, that one word—
“ Beware ! ”

She saw the huge object—but knew not the
ship

Sailing away toward the horizon’s dip !

But her keen eye was bright, her white wing
was strong,

She reached it and hovered above it ere long !
And stooping—just stooping—she struck on
the mast,

And fell to the deck—a hand held her fast !

“ Oh, Illa, dear Illa, Monina, I die !

Farewell to my visions of sweet ecstasy !

Would that my poor heart had never been
born ;

Oh Knight of the Lily, I gave you but scorn
For the generous gift of your own noble
heart,

Without greeting or farewell, forever, we
part ! ”

With a shriek and a pang she won her release,

But lost in that moment Eternity's peace !
And hiding her face in the foam-crested wave,
She wished that the Ocean might be her cold
grave !

For one weary sin, how many a mortal
Hath come short of heaven, the bright shining
portal !

So like the poor princess, whose fatal desire,
Then lighted for hope the funeral pyre !

In the meantime, the mother Queen sat on
her throne,

Which radiant with jewels of fairy land shone !
The dew-drops, whose glories the white rose
bedeck,

Were woven to shine on her beautiful neck ;
All the hues of the rainbow were blended in
them,

And they formed for her brow a fair diadem !
The throne was o'er hung with butterflies'
wings,

Embellished with gold of the beetles' bright
rings !

Her sceptre, an em'rald, wondrous in size,
Crowned with a star, she had plucked from
the skies !

Her robe was composed of the pansies' gay leaves,
Bright with the sunshine that summer time weaves.
Her magical slippers were made of white moss,
Embroidered by fairies, with gold-colored floss !
Her palace was gorgeous with wonderful things,
Trophies of conquest—And cooled by pure springs
The garden that bloomed with amaranth flowers,
Sweet with the incense of glorious bowers !
But a shadow had passed o'er the Fairy Queen's face,
And gave to her beauty, a pale, pensive grace !
The Knights of the Lily then sounded a call,
And fairy bands entered the Ivory Hall ;
But their music was silenced—the moment they saw
The Queen's pallid face—they waited in awe !
A blast of the bugle that moment was heard,
Each fairy head bowed to the Queen mother Bird !

And she spoke in her silvery accents at last,
When the pang of some memory over her
past :

“ Knights of the Lily, I bid you declare
What you know of the Princess Corilla, so
fair;
She left us at day-dawn; she comes not at
night,
Though the heaven above us with star lamps
is bright!
Oh, Illa, Monina, I gave to your care,
And ye Knights of the Lily, your princess so
fair!
Why weeping and sighing? Why blanches
each cheek?
What you know of the Princess, instantly
speak!”

“Dear Queen,” and the accents were tremulous,
low,
“Of the fate of the Princess—no one can know;
She left us to wander alone o'er the sea;
Perhaps she'll return unto us and to thee.”

The cheek of the Queen grew fearfully pale,
And she dropped in her anguish the bright,
gauzy veil,
But arose in her majesty, coldly and stern :

“ Perhaps, oh ye traitors! perhaps, she’ll return!
If she come, it is will—if not, ye shall die;
My knights of the crown, I bid you to fly
Swiftly and faithfully over the deep;
Rest not your wings and pause not to sleep
Till the Princess Corilla, your princess, is
found,
And dead or alive, on ocean or ground,
In darkness or sunshine, with mortal or fairy;
Haste, knights of the crown, nor falter nor
tarry!
Ho, guards of the Palace, these pris’ners are
ours!
Take them in chains to the dark cypress
bowers!
And Illa, Monina, the deadly night-shade,
Is the couch, where the head of the traitor is
laid;
Where the dragon-fly hisses; the raven and
owl

Make the darkness and terror more gloomy
and foul !

Where the prayers and the sighs and the tears
of your grief,

To your sin-haunted souls, brings never relief!
Sound the bugle again—let the warriors of
old

Be summoned in phalanx, this palace to hold !
We know not what dangers may threaten us
now,

Or menace the crown on the Fairy Queen's
brow!"

Every word of the monarch was swiftly
obeyed ;

And the Knights of the Lily, with dark chains
arrayed ;

While Illa, Monina, went forth to their doom,
To the cypress and nightshade, a prison and
tomb !

The Knights of the Crown rose upward afar,
And their pinions were glitt'ring with many a
star !

But their faces were sad, their aspect was stern,
As they sought the Princess' fair form discern !
A moment they paused to hold council of flight,
And determined to sweep o'er the Ocean that night !
So, led by an instinct to spirits not rare,
They found their lost Princess, Corilla the fair !
She had hidden beneath the white crested foam,
Trembling and sighing and weeping for home !

“Oh, Knights of the Crown,” she said through her tears,

“Return and permit me to die in my fears !
My white wing is broken—my sweet hopes are lost,
And the pure fairy dreams of my spirit are crost !
I cannot return—go back to the Queen,
And tell not my mother, Corilla you've seen ;
I never can sit on the em'rald throne ;
Go back then, and leave me to die all alone !”

“ No, never ! we dare not our Queen disobey ;
Oh, Princess, dear Princess, we’re filled with
dismay !

Our hearts and our lives forever are thine ;
Come back to the land where the star-blossoms
shine !

Come back, and thy mother will pardon, we
know,
Your sin or your folly, and comfort your
woe !”

They bore her away on their pinions of
light,

To the land that with blossoms forever is
bright ;

They entered the Palace before the fair dawn
Could touch with its beauty the garden or
lawn ;

The bugle blast sounded—the warriors and
Queen

Came flashing in gems, in gold and bright
sheen ;

While Corilla, the Princess, with head drooping
low,

And dew of the Ocean upon her pale brow ;

With the garlands, which perfume and glory
had shed

About her fair form, all withered and dead,
In anguish and grief of her spirit fell down,
And covered her face from the sight of the
Crown !

“ My daughter ! the Princess ! where hast
thou been ? ”

Said the solemn and startling voice of the
Queen ;

“ Thy bright wing is broken—what sorrow
hath crushed

Thy spirit, and all its sweet music hath
hushed ?

If only for sorrow thou mournest alone,
Corilla, thou knowest thy griefs are our
own !

When didst thy mother, my darling, ere
lose

The gift of sweet counsel ; to comfort re-
fuse ?

Come to my arms and my loving embrace,
Let me see once again your sweet sunny
face ! ”

Not a sound from the Princess—still bending
low,
With her heart throbbing wild in its anguish
and woe !
With those sweet thrilling words no comfort
there came
To the source of her grief—her terror and
shame !

“ Speak, instantly speak, my Knights of the
Crown,
Or the Guard of the Palace shall sweep you
all down !
What is this grief? Is it sorrow or sin?
Fear not to speak to your own loving Queen.”

“ I will answer myself,” said the Princess’ low
voice,
“ Since the deed and its penalty leave me no
choice!
A mortal hath touched me—to die I’ll prepare!
But mother, oh mother, this life is so fair !
And Sir Avoline, Knight of the Lily, so brave,
Who loves me, will come to my rescue and
save !”

Then sadness fell o'er the fairy bands all,
And silence pervaded the Ivory Hall !
But the voice of the Queen once more was
heard,
And the swords of the warriors leaped forth
at her word !
“ This Knight of the Lily once more she shall
see ;
Bring hither, with Illa, Monina, to me ! ”

“ Oh spare me, my mother,” the lost Princess
cried ;
“ Enough ; I shall never be Avoline’s bride ;
Enough ; this anguish my spirit has broken,
Why wilt thou demand some still deeper
token ? ”

“ Silence ! lost Princess, I care not to hear
Thy penitent sigh—to see thy false tear !
Though my heart-strings with anguish should
sever,
I will not forgive thee, thou false one—no,
never ! ”

Then Avoline, Knight of the Lily, stood forth,

"Oh, what is my life, dear Fairy Queen worth ?

Let my head or my heart, the penalty pay,
And the Princess Corilla be free from this day ;

I would suffer the tortures of lingering woe,
Her sweet thanks to hear and her pure love know ! "

"Wilt thou take her in all her dishonor now ?
Her bright beauty lost--no crown on her brow ?

To live in dark exile, far, far, away !

Speak, Knight of the Lily, and tell me, I pray ! "

" If Corilla, the Princess, now loves me, I will ;
Dishonored and friendless, my heart is hers still !

And fairy land still would not fairy land be,
Unless her sweet presence were granted to me ! "

“Thou hast heard him lost Princess, what
dost thou say?
Wilt thou lead this brave Knight from glory
away?
If thou hast e'er loved him, I know thou wilt
not
E'en wish he should share thy dark, dreary
lot!”

“Live, live, brave Avoline; know for thy joy,
The love of thy Princess no death can destroy;
I will not accept thee, so gentle and brave;
Corilla, dishonored, will rest in her grave!”

He bowed to the Princess; he knelt at her
feet;
“Look in my eyes—my darling, my sweet!
Has life one joy on me to confer,
Unblest by the hallowing presence of her
Who has been my life's star—my angel—my
guide,
Through the sunshine and storm, the tempest
and tide,

By the Powers that live in the earth or the
sky,
Corilla, the Princess, my bride, *shall not die!*"

She rose in her beauty—no longer a bird ;
She rose at the sound of Love's magical
word !

A creature of glory—a spirit redeemed,
By the wonderful light from his spirit that
beamed ;

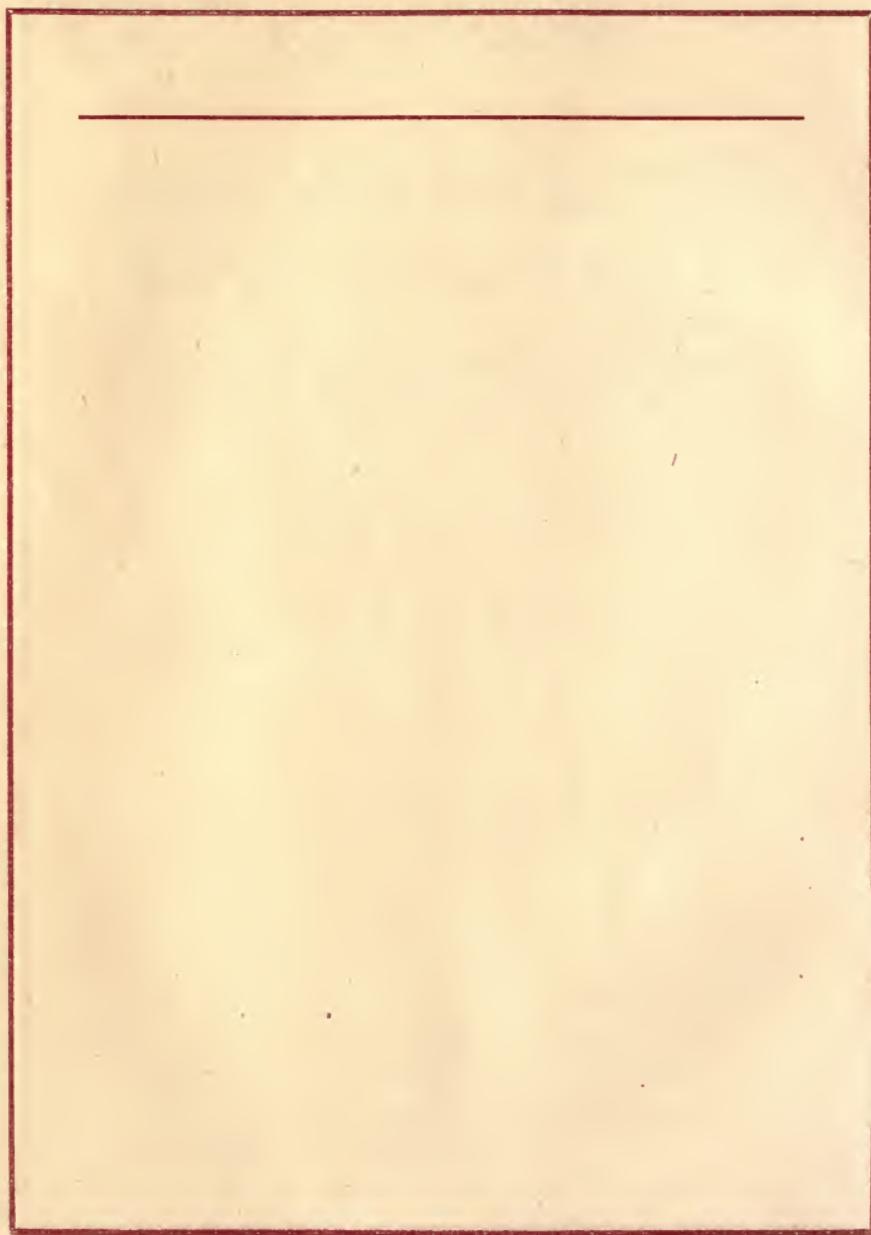
Immortal in youth—in majesty, grace,
And was clasped to his heart in a deathless
embrace !

"Corilla and Avoline—blest, doubly blest,"
Said the Queen, "Ye nobly have stood the
stern test !

If a spirit be found who constant endures,
Mid anguish, dishonor, with love like to yours,
The lost one is saved ! And Avoline, thine
Is the honor ; and gifts are Divine !
Thy beautiful bride is a sov'reign, and thou
This day shalt thyself place the crown on her
brow ;

And Avoline—ever—forever—a king,
Shall wear for his emblem, Love's own signet
ring."

Then shouts of delight rang aloud through
the air :
" Long life to the brave and Corilla the fair!"







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